

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE REPORT

ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS CLIMATE

- Orange County's per capita income level is higher than the U.S., California, and neighboring counties' average per capita income levels. The growth rate of our per capita income trails that of the nation, state and other areas with similar socio-economic conditions.
- Orange County's unemployment rate is low compared with the nation and state, and is similar to comparable regions (Boston, Austin, Seattle, Santa Clara County).
- Orange County ranks below the nation and surrounding counties in housing affordability, but similar to comparable regions. Our rental affordability is below the state average and most other comparable regions. Demand for housing in Orange County is more than twice the national average. Most regions comparable to Orange County have more new housing being constructed relative to new jobs created.
- Orange County has one of the most diverse high-tech economies in the U.S. Jobs created by high-technology companies offer higher average wage levels than other segments of our economy. Telecommunications and computer software are the fastest growing sectors of the technology industry in Orange County.
- Orange County's gross product is growing more slowly than California and the U.S.

TECHNOLOGY

- Orange County patent grants were fairly static between 1992 and 1997, while other similar areas experienced increasing levels of patent grants during the same period. Orange County experienced a surge in patent grants in 1998.
- Orange County trails the state and national averages for the number of K-12 grade students per computer in Orange County schools.
- The percentage of adults who have access to the internet in Orange County is above the national average and all but two U.S. locations – Washington D.C. and San Francisco.
- Ninety percent of Orange County firms have an internet presence, with e-mail and advertising as the top internet uses.

EDUCATION

- Orange County students on average have a higher SAT score than the state and nation. The number of UC-CSU eligible graduates is increasing slowly over time.
- The number of English Learners (formerly Limited English Proficiency) in Orange County schools is increasing slowly. Compared to surrounding and peer counties, Orange County had the second largest enrollment of English Learners in the 97-98 school year.
- On average, Orange County scored above the state on the Stanford 9 fourth grade math and reading scores in 1998 and 1999.
- High School drop out rates in Orange County are lower than the state and neighboring county rates.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- Eighty-five percent of women giving birth in Orange County receive prenatal care during the first trimester – earlier than the state average and most of our peers. Sub-populations with the lowest percentage of early prenatal care were Latina mothers and teenage mothers.
- Orange County's welfare caseload has decreased since 1994/95, with a reduction similar to the nationwide decrease and greater than the statewide decrease.
- Between 1989 and 1995, the percent of Orange County children in poverty has increased. However, in 1995 Orange County had a lower rate of children in poverty than most of California's counties.
- The death rates for the leading causes of death for children under five in Orange County, with the exception of auto accidents, have decreased significantly since 1993.
- Compared to other California counties, Orange County ranks as one of the lowest in death rates for death due to unintentional injury, motor vehicle accidents and suicide. Orange County's heart disease, tuberculosis, AIDS and breast cancer rates are higher than most California counties.
- Among children 2 years of age or younger, Orange County has higher immunization rates than the state average.